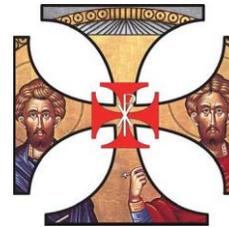


National Philoptochos Society 2016-2018 Committee Report



Membership

Co-Chairs: Alexis Limberakis and Maria Tamvakologos

Liaison: Martha Stefanidakis

*Members: Cindy Demeris Stella Pantelides
Mary Doreza Maria Skiadas
Michele Genetos Barbara Vittas
Marilynn Jemas Peggy Vranas
Katherine Kotsis Athanasia Ward
Helen Malachias Margaret Yates
Anne Michals Eleni Zaferes
Celeste Moschos*

On behalf of the Membership Committee it is a pleasure to greet all of you who have gathered for the spring 2018 meeting of the National Philoptochos Board.

One of the most important endeavors of the Membership Committee is to increase membership by spreading the good works of Philoptochos and making our mission known. As an appointed membership committee, we are committed to coming up with new ideas to increase membership through open and lively discussion of thoughts and ideas. The committee participates in monthly conference calls. The overwhelming majority of the committee feels that the most important issues are to raise awareness of the incredible work Philoptochos does, as well as to be visible and approachable to potential members.

Philoptochos does not stand alone regarding stagnant and declining membership numbers. Organizations across the board are seeing declining numbers. Lack of time and less energy for additional projects or commitments seem to be the biggest obstacles preventing prospective members from joining Philoptochos. Philoptochos needs women's talents and time, the latter being most valuable. We must be sensitive to the changing world around us and understand the lives of the members we want to attract.

Today's women work more outside of the home and are more active than ever; so if we want them to be part of Philoptochos, we have to offer a milieu which permits participation and engages their children as well, for they will not give up valuable family time easily. The younger generation is interested in service work; however, they do not have the flexibility, spare time or availability to commit on a continuous basis. Also, Millennials place less value on more formal and traditional means of communicating. As Philoptochos leaders we must identify and remove obstacles that discourage participation.

Is the structure of Philoptochos meetings an obstacle for involvement in Philoptochos? It has been suggested for Chapters to have a "call me once" commitment. If a member can volunteer for one service project or activity that interests them during the year, they will be less hesitant to join. New members should be allowed to chair or spear head an event or new outreach project as well. Let them know we value their ideas and we need their skill sets and knowledge. Emphasize that they will experience the satisfaction of helping others and improving the lives of those in need.

Membership Committee (continued)

It is difficult to attract young adult women if we do not have young adult women in the “group.” Young women need to feel part of a team. Something that has been discussed in our conference calls is that we must think “outside the box” and have younger members in the forefront. We must give new and younger members leadership roles and have them highly visible in order for potential young members to be able to associate with them. In the changing world dominated by social media and more impersonal means of communicating, what people desire most is an opportunity to connect with one another. People want to bond and create relationships with others, as this is human nature. Philoptochos must create opportunities for women to connect, and foster an environment where they will open up and feel more comfortable. If they feel welcomed and embraced, they will invite Philoptochos into their lives and will introduce Philoptochos to their friends, who we hope in turn invite their friends to become Philoptochos members, and so on and so on. Then....one by one we rebuild Philoptochos!

Are you part of the solution to increase membership and help retain current members? Think about what you are doing to invite, embrace and engage new members. We all must be committed to sharing the news of the good works of Philoptochos to our Greek Orthodox sisters in Christ and to bring them into our “army of women.” We need to remain relevant! Let’s impress upon prospective members that their time, talent and resources are welcome and needed, and that the philanthropic and charitable work that Philoptochos does is more important than ever!